Therapeutic Reading List

These recommendations provide valuable insights into mental health and offer support for personal growth. Books are not a substitute for therapy.

Anxiety & Depression

Edmund Bourne - The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook: cognitive tools/ worksheets
Steff Du Bois – I'm Not OK & That's OK - a very practical guide with CBT & ACT tools
Miriam Greenspan – Healing Through the Dark Emotions- on harnessing the power of painful emotions
Matt Haig - Reasons to Stay Alive - a candid and inspiring account of depression
Russ Harris – The Happiness Trap - on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)
Steven Hayes - Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life - ACT skills workbook
Kay Redfield Jamison - An Unquiet Mind - a memoir of bipolar disorder
Jon Kabat-Zinn - The Mindful Way Through Depression – how to disengage with rumination with non-judgement and mindfulness
Andrew Solomon - Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression

General Mental Health

Brené Brown – The Gifts of Imperfection – research on courage, shame and wholeheartedness (all her books are worth exploring)
Mark Epstein - Advice Not Given - using the Buddhist eightfold path for mental health
Michele Filgate - What My Mother and I Don't Talk About – a series of essays

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Cheri Huber - There is Nothing Wrong With You & Be The Person You Want to Find
Nicole Lepera - How to Do the Work - practical guide for mental health and healing
Kristin Neff - The Yin and Yang of Self-Compassion - practical practices
Vienna Pharaon - Origins of You – on how childhood family patterns shape adult relationships
Nedra Glover Tawwab - Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself
Brianna Wiest - 101 Essays That Will Change the Way You Think

Trauma Recovery

Stephanie Covington - Awakening Your Sexuality - on intimacy after trauma
Deb Dana – Anchored: How to Befriend Your Nervous System Using Polyvagal Theory
Ramani Durvasula - Don't You Know Who I Am? – on narcissistic abuse recovery
Lindsay Gibson - Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents
Diane Poole Heller – The Power of Attachment - on childhood attachment
Jackson MacKenzie - Whole Again - on finding yourself after an abusive relationship
Resmaa Menakem - My Grandmother's Hands - on racialized trauma
Emma Quinlan- Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn – a simple guide to trauma responses
Richard Schwartz – No Bad Parts – learning how parts of yourself can heal trauma
Bessel Van Der Kolk - The Body Keeps the Score – on the body's role in trauma

Embodiment, Rest & Nervous System Regulation

Deb Dana - Befriending Your Nervous System - polyvagal tools for regulation
Tricia Hersey - Rest Is Resistance - on the right to rest and the exploits of productivity
Jessica Maguire - The Nervous System Reset - a guide to reduce traumatic stress
Hillary McBride - The Wisdom of Your Body
Andrew Weil - Breathing: simple therapeutic breathwork technique

Mindfulness & Meditation

Pema Chödrön - When Things Fall Apart & Comfortable with Uncertainty - managing difficult emotions with compassion
Mark Epstein - Thoughts Without a Thinker - on Buddhism and psychoanalysis
Dan Harris - 10% Happier: a meditation homage (also check out Dan's podcast)
Jon Kabat-Zinn - Wherever You Go, There You Are- a meditation classic
Jack Kornfield - The Wise Heart - accessible Western teachings
Sharon Salzberg - Real Happiness - structured, accessible practices
Chogyam Trungpa - Smile at Fear - a Buddhist classic on courage

Relationships & Communication

Melody Beattie - Codependent No More – on how others behaviors influence you
Gregory Boyle - The Whole Language – on compassion and unconditional love in relationships
Jefferson Fisher - The Next Conversation – strategies for better communication
Sue Johnson - Hold Me Tight – on moving away from fear-based relating
David Richo - How to Be an Adult in Relationships - on mindful love
Marshall Rosenberg - Speaking Peace: non-violent communication tools
Daniel Siegel - The Neurobiology of We – how relationships shape the brain and who we are

Chronic Pain & Illness

Eli Clare - Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure - on politics and crip theory
Alan Gordon - The Way Out - on neuroplastic pain and the brain-body connection
Alison Kafer - Feminist, Queer, Crip – on intersections of disability, politics and identity
Peter Levine - Freedom from Pain – a practical guide to simple somatic and relaxation

techniques

Megan O'Rourke - Invisible Kingdom: Reimagining Chronic Illness – a personal account of medical gaslighting, systemic failures and a silent epidemic of chronic illnesses

Creativity & Attention

Moshe Bar – Mind Wandering - on neuroscience, daydreaming & creativity

Oliver Burkeman - Time Management for Mortals

Julia Cameron – The Artist's Way - a classic guide to get through creative block

Elizabeth Gilbert - Big Magic - About creativity, fear, and overcoming writer's block

Johann Hari - Stolen Focus – on a systemic and cultural crisis of attention

Shaun McNiff – Trust the Process: a guide to letting go by a creative arts therapist

Cal Newport - Digital Minimalism – on intentionality use of attention and time in the

Jenny Odell - How to Do Nothing - resisting the attention economy and reclaiming your creativity

Rick Rubin – A Creative Act: A Way of Being

Rebecca Solnit- Wanderlust & A Field Guide to Getting Lost – two pleasureful reads about deliberate and slow engagement with the world

Grief & Loss

Alua Arthur - Briefly Perfectly Human - on the dying process by a death doula

Joanne Cacciatore - Bearing the Unbearable - a holistic/mindful approach to grief

Nick Care & Sean O'Hagan – Faith, Hope, and Carnage – a thoughtful conversation on loss

Joan Didion - A Year of Magical Thinking – a memoir on intimate partner loss

Cariad Lloyd - You Are Not Alone: A New Way to Grieve - on parent loss

Martin Prechtel - The Smell of Rain on Dust: a poetic indigenous perspective on grief

and connections to praise
Francis Weller - Gates of Grief & The Wild Edge of Sorrow – soul-centered approaches and perspectives on grief

Climate Grief, Racial/Social Justice & Activism

Trauma Stewardship - Connie Burk & Laura van Dernoot Lipsky – a guide for preventing burnout while working with trauma and injustice
Camille Sapara Barton - Tending Grief - on caring for social and climate grief
adrienne maree brown - Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good - embodied practices for social justice movements
Ta-Nehisi Coates - Between the World and Me – on racial construction, family and identity Ibram X. Kendi – How to Be an Antiracist – on active opposition
Sarah Schulman - The Gentrification of the Mind: Witness to a Lost Imagination- a memoir on loss, community, and social change
Anneliese Singh - The Racial Healing Handbook: Practical Activities to Help You Challenge Privilege, Confront Systemic Racism, and Engage in Collective Healing – a workbook for racial justice and healing

Neurodivergence

Hannah Belcher - Taking Off the Mask - exercises for minimizing camouflaging
Brock Eide - The Dyslexic Advantage
Eric Garcia - We're Not Broken - a gay, Latino perspective on autism
Edward M. Hallowell - ADHD 2.0 – a standard handbook for learning about yourself
Gabor Maté - Scattered Minds - personal and historical conversations about ADHD
Devon Price - Unmasking Autism Deborah Reber - Differently Wired: accessible for

parents of ND kids
Tamara Rosier - Your Brain's Not Broken – a female perspective with tools to improve executive functioning skills

Addiction & Recovery

Alan Carr – Easy Way: a proven method, very helpful with nicotine and sugar
Lisa Najavits - Finding Your Best Self: Recovery from Addiction, Trauma, or Both – integrative treatment for co-occurring conditions
Anna Lembke – Dopamine Nation - about pain and the search for pleasure
Gabor Maté - In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts – on addiction and compassion
Holly Whitaker - Quit Like a Woman - an inspiring call for sobriety

Gender, Sexuality & LGBTQI+

Mel Cassidy – Radical Relating: A Queer and Polyamory-Informed Guide
Jancee Dunn - Hot and Bothered- a candid guide for menopause
Jessica Fern – Polysecure: Attachment, Trauma and Consensual Nonmonogomy
bell hooks - The Will to Change - fresh alternatives to traditional masculinity
Thomas Paige McBee – Amateur - a compelling study of masculinity
Emily Nagoski - Come as You Are – science-based normalizing view on women's sexuality
Dr. Mindy Pelz - The Menopause Reset- simple and practical tools for menopause
Holly Richmond - Reclaiming Pleasure: A Sex-Positive Guide for Moving Past Sexual Trauma and Living a Passionate Life
Sarah Schulman – Ties that Bind: Familial Homophobia and Its Consequences
Erika Shershun - Healing Sexual Trauma Workbook: Somatic Skills to Help You Feel Safe in Your Body, Create Boundaries, and Live with Resilience
Melissa Walker - Whole-Body Sex: Somatic Sex Therapy and the Lost Language of the Erotic Body – an award-winning guide to embodied sexuality